

Fria själar

Ideologi och verklighet hos Locke, Mill och Benedictsson.

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Free Souls
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Abstract

This dissertation discusses the following five texts: The British 17th century philosopher John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, with focus on the fifth chapter "Property" in the second treatise, the British 19th century philosopher John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and *The Subject of Women*, and the Swedish 19th century writer Victoria Benedictsson's novel *Money* and her diaries, *Stora boken 1-3*. The common denominator for these works is, in my opinion, a view and a dream of the human being as individually sovereign and independent. The purpose of the dissertation is to examine how the obliviousness of human dependence looks like in these texts, what consequences the obliviousness have and what kind of interests it may serve.

The dissertation consists of two parts. The first part examines the texts by John Locke and John Stuart Mill. The second part discusses first the novel *Money* by Victoria Benedictsson and finally her diaries.

The introduction consists of a brief exposition of the feminist, communitarian and socialist critiques of the liberal view of the subject – a view that deals directly with independence and sovereignty.

In the first part I examine some of the fundamental narratives of the Western liberal tradition to find the place of *the body* and *dependency*. I argue that both John Locke and John Stuart Mill set the body aside in the texts I am analyzing. To deny the body is partly to deny the basic terms of the human condition that is not the subject of a free choice; entailing in part denying that humans are relational creatures, on one hand quite physically dependent on the care of others for their early survival and on the other, dependent on others to become a subject. The corporeal, the relational and our human condition of dependence are also the core through which this book's two parts are connected. The second part is an illustrative and elaborative case study of what consequences the obliviousness to human dependence and the dream of human sovereignty can have in an individual being's life – and the person is in this case both a character in a novel and the author of a diary.

Keywords: *John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Victoria Benedictsson, liberalism, the subject, individualism, independence, modernity, feminism, gender and writing.*

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